



Tourism Tuesday

A Message from Director:

Good afternoon.

The holiday season is a time for reflection, and this weekend I stopped to think about some of the moments in 2016 that made me proud to be an ambassador for tourism in Arizona, and proud of the work our team at AOT does to elevate the state's profile as a visitor destination.

Those moments are many (and I'm sure I've overlooked a few), but here, ordered as chronologically as my memory will allow, are the success stories that are dancing in my head as we approach the close of another year:

- Arizona hosted the 2016 College Football Playoff National Championship, which attracted 65,000 visitors and generated \$274 million in economic impact for the state.
- AOT participated in its first consumer travel show—the Travel and Adventure Show in Chicago—where we showcased Arizona's amazing assets to more than 20,000 prospective visitors and earned “Best in Show” honors for our booth.
- Gov. Doug Ducey welcomed AOT into the Governor's Economic Opportunity Office, recognizing the visitor industry's vital role in building Arizona's economy.
- Tucson became the first city in the United States to be designated as a [UNESCO World City of Gastronomy](#), bringing well-deserved international attention to Arizona's food culture.
- Grand Canyon National Park welcomed more than 6 million visitors, and was named the “Best Place to Visit in the USA” by *U.S. News & World Report* and “Best Overseas Attraction” by the readers of *National Geographic Traveller* (UK).
- AOT promoted Arizona's national parks and monuments with target-market activations built around screenings of the IMAX film *National Parks Adventure*—resulting in 14 million media impressions, 1,000-plus visitors guide requests and a 26 percent lift in year-over-year hotel bookings on [Expedia.com](#).
- We launched a completely redesigned version of [www.visitarizona.com](#), debuted the second season of our [Arizona Expedition](#) series, and spread Random Acts of Sunshine® in our target cities of Chicago and San Francisco.

- And, finally, as I announced last week, we moved into a brand-new office alongside the Arizona Commerce Authority, the Arizona-Mexico Commission and the Arizona Office of Film and Media.

And we are not done with 2016 just yet. Tonight, football fans will gather at Chase Field in downtown Phoenix for the [Motel 6 Cactus Bowl](#), featuring Baylor and Boise State. Then, on Dec. 30, Tucson will host the [Nova Home Loans Arizona Bowl](#) pitting Air Force against South Alabama. And finally, on New Year's Eve, our state will ring out the year much the same way we rang it in: with a high-profile College Football Playoff matchup between national powers at University of Phoenix Stadium.

If you encounter visitors wearing the colors of Clemson or Ohio State this week, give them a warm Arizona welcome and wish them luck in the [PlayStation Fiesta Bowl](#). You might also want to compliment them on their team's success—because, like us, they had a pretty good year.

Debbie Johnson
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism
#AZTourismTuesday

AOT in Action

New AOT Research Now Available

The following reports are now available at tourism.az.gov:

- Arizona Lodging November 2016
- State Park Visitation October 2016
- Gross Sales & Tourism Taxes September 2016

For the latest and historical tourism indicator reports, please visit our [Data and Trends](#) page at tourism.az.gov.

Wanted: Worthy Eateries for New 'Expedition Foodie' Website

AOT is partnering with the Arizona Restaurant Association to develop a new website dedicated to positioning Arizona as a top-tier destination for culinary-travelers. The site will include robust listings for "foodie hotspots" across the state, and the ARA is currently seeking submissions.

If you are affiliated with an iconic Arizona bar or restaurant, you can submit a listing at www.expeditionfoodieaz.com. Or, if you work in the membership department at a CVB, please share this link with your member restaurants so they can submit.

Upcoming AOT Events & Activities

[Mexico Media Tour](#)

Date: Jan. 7-13

Locations: Grand Canyon, Page, Monument Valley, Chinle, Flagstaff, Winslow, and Sedona
AOT will coordinate a media tour for Mexican journalists that highlights Greater Phoenix and Northern Arizona.

New York Media Mission

Date: Jan. 23-27

Location: New York City

New York is the headquarters of the media industry in the U.S., and is home to numerous freelance journalists. AOT will lead a weeklong media mission to this key market that will leverage Arizona's hosting of the 2017 NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four as a story/content hook. This mission will include scheduled desk-side appointments with writers and editors, as well as appointments at TravMedia's International Media Marketplace.

Upcoming Industry Events & Activities

Indian Nations and Tribes Legislative Day

Date: Wednesday, Jan. 11

Location: Arizona State Capitol

The Office on Tribal Relations, in partnership with the Inter Tribal Council of Arizona (ITCA) and AZ Indian Gaming Association (AIGA), will host Indian Nations and Tribes Legislative Day on the Senate Lawn of the Arizona State Capitol on Jan. 11. This event pays tribute to American Indian peoples and their contributions to the prosperity and cultural diversity of Arizona and the United States. AOT will have an information table at the exhibitor fair, which will take place from 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Destination Capitol Hill

Date: March 28-29, 2017

Location: Washington, D.C.

The event brings travel leaders from across the country to Washington, D.C. to educate policymakers about the power of travel. The program combines a legislative day on Capitol Hill with advocacy training, guest speakers and peer-to-peer networking. DCH provides delegates with an opportunity to learn about upcoming legislation that impacts travel, network with peers and meet with members of Congress to stress the importance of travel as an economic driver.

Arizona News

Self-Driving Uber Cars Might Soon Be an Option for Arizona Visitors

Gov. Doug Ducey released the following statement last week regarding Uber's decision to move its self-driving cars to Arizona:

"Arizona welcomes Uber self-driving cars with open arms and wide open roads. While California puts the brakes on innovation and change with more bureaucracy and more regulation, Arizona is paving the way

for new technology and new businesses. In 2015, I signed an executive order supporting the testing and operation of self-driving cars in Arizona with an emphasis on innovation, economic growth, and most importantly, public safety. This is about economic development, but it's also about changing the way we live and work. Arizona is proud to be open for business."

According to a report in the Arizona Republic, Uber would likely need to test the self-driving vehicles on streets in Arizona for months to produce digital maps the cars use to navigate autonomously.

Volunteers Needed for NCAA Men's Final Four

The Phoenix Local Organizing Committee seeks 3,600 volunteers to assist with the 2017 NCAA Men's Final Four. The committee is recruiting volunteers for the numerous community and ancillary events before and during the Final Four (April 1-3). Duties include hospitality areas, operations, information centers and transportation. Volunteers can register at www.phoenixfinalfour.com/volunteer.

Industry News

[YouTube Travel Videos Still Drive Inspiration for Trip-Planning Tourists](#)

Everyone has been talking about video this year and mostly regarding newer platforms and products such as Snapchat, Instagram Stories, and Facebook Live, for example. But YouTube still dominates content marketing. (Skift, Dec. 23)

[Hotel trade groups sue over Seattle initiative that gives new rights to workers](#)

Hospitality associations are suing Seattle over new rights for hotel workers that the city's voters approved last month. The groups object to a provision requiring hotels to keep lists of guests whom workers accuse of sexual assault or harassment. (Seattle Times, Dec. 21)

[Can Technology Boost Hotel Customer Loyalty?](#)

A pair of studies has put a magnifying lens on the technology innovations—such as smartphone check-ins and digitally-enabled loyalty programs—that make a customer loyal to a particular hotel or resort. (Travel Pulse, Dec. 23)

Did You Know?

Residents of Show Low celebrate the arrival of the New Year with the dropping of a giant, illuminated playing card—the deuce of clubs. The 7-foot-by-4-foot card—which is lowered at midnight from a crane in downtown's Festival Marketplace—is a nod to how, according to legend, Show Low got its name: Two ranchers, Marion Clark and Corydon Cooley, decided to settle territorial dispute with a card game in which the object was to show the lowest card. Cooley won the game (and the dispute) by drawing the two of clubs.

Statewide Calendar of Events

Visit www.VisitArizona.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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